THE POLYTECHNIC INSTITUTION, REGENT-STREET.

The new series of dissolving views now exhibiting at this institution, plethoric of attraction, are particularly interesting at this moment as showing some of the localities prominently brought before the public by the recent operations of the French in Italy,—operations which the historian will hereafter find difficult of explanation in connection with French consistency. If our volatile, disorganized, but nevertheless wonderful neighbours wish to learn the opinion entertained by the ordinary English public of their proceedings before Rome, they should send a deputation to the Polytechnic, and the shout with which the demonstrator's reference to the bombardment of remains which belong to the whole world is received, would give them an insight to it.

We should like to see a series of good lectures on architecture and architectural history illustrated here. It is not possible to visit this institution without picking up something. You go into the theatre, and the lecturer is speaking of water—that it is compounded of two gases, oxygen and hydrogen—he decomposes some, shows how hydrogen will burn singly—how oxygen will re-illume a blown-out taper—and how the two together will explode, to the alarm of a whole row of Mrs. Smith's ringletted charges and the evident delight of the school-boys. Well, all this you know: you have passed it long since; so you have the theory of dew, evaporation, and the principles of the steam-engine; but, nevertheless, it revives previous studies, and keeps the mind awake to what is passing around us every hour in nature's great laboratory. In the midst of it, too, you get an idea or two: he leaves the elementary, and for a minute or two shows how abstract discoveries made by the mathematician and the patient investigator in the closet are brought to bear on the every-day life, and to increase the comforts and lengthen the lives of the multitude; he gives you the last bit of knowledge in connection with springs, and you probably go out saying, I had either forgotten that, or had never heard it. Old and young, wise and unlearned, may spend an hour or two usefully as well as pleasantly at the Polytechnic Institution.

NOTES IN THE PROVINCES.

The west end of the Early English chapel at Stourbridge is said to have given way considerably, owing to the cutting of the railway and the continual shaking by the trains passing it.——Remains of interest, it seems, have been already found at Bury St. Edmunds, where the tracing of the extensive foundations of the monastery has been commenced, under direction of the Bury Archæological Institute.——Contracts for rebuilding Halstead Church having been entered into, the demolition of the old edifice is in progress. The subscription is rapidly increasing: 1,500*l.* have been already realized.——The restoration of Holy Rhood Church, Southampton, is now finished, excepting the tower, and the church was to be opened on the 28th.——It has been resolved to erect a new district church, with free sittings, and a parsonage, in St. Maurice and St. Mary Kalender, united parishes, at Winchester. A site has been chosen by the committee, and an endowment offered by the curate of St. Maurice's. A subscription is also in progress, headed by 100*l.* from the bishop.——The price of gas at Poole is to be reduced from 10s. to 8s. 4d. per 1,000 cubic feet, in the hope, apparently, of increasing the dividend, even now 6 per cent., by a less impracticable price than heretofore.——The foundation stone of a new church in commemoration of the majority of Viscountess Fielding, has just been laid at Downing, near Holywell,—a better way of laying out money on such an occasion than practice generally inculcates.——Attempts are being made, by sale of sites by auction, to 'project' a new town on the sea coast of North Wales, at Llandudno, near Conway, on an estate belonging to Mr. E. M. Lloyd Mostyn, M.P.——Two new maps of Liverpool have just been published by the borough engineer. Contour lines are given for sewerage purposes, &c., from actual measurement of levels, at every 4 feet of altitude on the large scale map, and at every 8 feet on the smaller.——The United Gas Company at Liverpool, while admitting that the consumption of their gas has been checked by depression of trade, have just declared a dividend of 9 per cent., or 4½ per cent. on last half-year's proceeds. They also announce that there is now a progressive increase in the company's rental.——The chief stone of St. Paul's Church, Portwood, Stockport, was laid on Wednesday week.——An organ has been built for Hatfield Church, by Messrs. Forster and Andrews, of Hull. It is encased in the Gothic style of the building. The gallery and pews, in this church, which block up the northern limb of the transept, are to be removed, it is said, and the wooden partitions in the gallery, it is hoped, will follow.——The chapel at Brougham Hall, has been recently "splendidly fitted up in the antique style," (?) by Mr. William Brougham, brother to Lord Brougham.——On Wednesday week, the Ancient Fraternity of Wallers, Bricklayers, and Plasterers, at Newcastle, laid the foundation stone of their new hall, now being erected in the Castle Garth, by the York, Newcastle, and Berwick Railway Company.——The aid of the Admiralty is now expected at Queenstown, late Cove of Cork, in the formation of a long talked of pier, in place of the present miserable landing place.——Nearly 2,000 poor starving Irishmen were lately set to work on the Newry Ship Canal, at 9s. a-week, but they had no sooner recruited their exhausted energies a little, than they struck work for 12s. a-week, and are now idle as ever.

RAILWAY JOTTINGS.

The calls for August, so far as lately advertised, amount to 1,124,346*l.* For August last year they were 3,122,773*l.* For the eight months of the present year they have now reached 15,758,930*l.*, against 25,750,019*l.* in the corresponding period of 1848.——It is stated that a proposition has been made by one of the contractors on the Oxford, Worcester, and Wolverhampton to complete the most productive part of that line on his own responsibility, taking as security the tolls to become due on the opening.——A local paper says, that a contractor of some considerable standing has offered to make the line of railway from Portishead to Bristol (following the course of the river), for 50,000*l.*, exclusive of termini.——On a report that the works on the Basingstoke and Salisbury line are to be shortly resumed after a lengthened stoppage, the Salisbury correspondent of a Hampshire paper says this has rather surprised him, as he had long looked as despairingly at the embankments and tunnel near the city as at the excavations, &c. of the Salisbury and Southampton Canal which was to have done such wonders for Salisbury years ago.——The tube, it seems, has been itself considerable injured, in the recent accident at the Britannia-bridge. The four upright beams of the off entrance are cracked at about 2 feet from the bottom of the tube, and three of the top cross beams, and three of the bottom ones in connection with them, are broken in like manner about 12 inches from the centre of the tube, in addition to which, one of the lifting beams gave way close to the bearing.——A new bridge, on the principle of the Besons-bridge, over the Seine, near Paris, has been erected, we hear, on the Reading, Guildford, and Reigate Railway, to carry a double line over a gully at Albury. The span is 50 feet. Five light girders support a wooden platform. The weight of the girders, composed of wrought and cast-iron, does not amount to 10 tons. When tested, this light structure did not deflect in the middle, it is said, more than ⅛ths of an inch with one of the heaviest of the South-Eastern locomotives on it, and at a speed of 45 miles an hour the deflection was very little more than ⅛ths of an inch.——The high level bridge at Newcastle was opened for the passage of trains on Wednesday week. Only one line of rails, however, is complete enough for traffic.—The tailors of Gateshead appear, from the *Observer*, to be disputing about the trowsers that saved the life of one of the workmen employed at this bridge, by hooking him in descent on a good stout nail driven in where a nail had no other special business to be at that moment. Why don't the nailers take example by the tailors, and uphold the admirable adaptation of *their* stout material for the *hooking* of passing workmen?——A labourer has been remanded at the Clerkenwell Police-court, for urging a driver of two loaded trucks to take them, in defiance of orders to the contrary, along a temporary bridge on the East and West India Docks line crossing the Great Northern at Islington, while the bridge was insecure and under repair, and whereby the bridge gave way and killed a man and two horses on the spot.——A New York correspondent of the *Times* states that railways on a new plan are to be introduced into the streets of that city, whereby omnibuses will be done away with. There will be but one rail placed on upright stanchions. The carriages will be suspended from their axles, will hang near the ground, and will be drawn by horses. The railway will not interfere with the passing of other carriages.

THE BRICK TAX IN 1711.

The following appears to be a printed statement drawn up to bear out a petition to the House of Commons in the reign of Queen Anne, against a forthcoming tax on bricks. As it is a genuine statistical account of building matters in the metropolis a century and a half ago, you perhaps will think it worth perpetuating in the pages of your journal.

A. B. S.

"A Just and Exact Account taken out of the Books of the several Brickmakers, Lime-burners, Tilemakers, Slaters, Masons, and Paviers, of the Goods made, or brought in by them, within the Weekly Bills of Mortality, or within Ten Miles of the same, in the Year 1711, in relation to the intended Duties on Bricks, Lime, Tiles, &c., humbly offer'd to the Consideration of this Honourable House.

	Bricks.	
The total of bricks made *anno* 1711, within the bills of mortality, and ten miles' distance, as appears by the makers' books	23688000	
Waste and loss to be deducted, not less than	03711000	
Remaines to be taxed	25977000	
Which at 3s. per thousand comes to		£3896 11 00
Plain tiles made in the aforesaid year and distance, appears to be 2250000 at 4s. per thousand, comes to		0450 00 00
Ridge tiles made in the said year and distance, and sold therein is 12000. at 6s. per thousand		0003 12 00
Pantiles made in the said year and distance, is 450000, at 6s. per thousand, comes to		0135 00 00
Paving tiles made in the said year and distance, of twelve inches square is 39000, at 3s. per hundred		0058 10 00
Paving tiles of the lesser sort, of ten inches square, is 59000, at 1s. per hundred		0029 10 00
Slates used for covering, the year and distance aforesaid, is 150000, at 4s. per thousand		0030 00 00
Lyme made or used, in the year and distance aforesaid, is 21319 hundred, which at 6s. 3d. per hundred, or 2s. per quarter, comes to		7599 13 00
Note.—That 3d. per bushel on lime is as much as the whole value of the commodity (water and land-carriage excepted).		
Pebbles, ragstones, &c., for paving streets and stables, &c., is 11000 ton, at 2s. per ton		1100 00 00
Portland, Purbeck, Rygate, Oxford, Newcastle, and marble stone, brought and used in the said year and distance, is 3355 tons, at 2s. per ton		0503 05 00
		13806 01 00
That by the aboresaid account, the yearly duty amounts to 13,806*l.* 1s.		13806 01 00
Out of which it is reasonably to be supposed, that one-third after the passing of this Act will not be consumed, by reason of the heavy duties upon the said materials, viz., the sum of		4602 00 04
The remaining duty		9204 00 08

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